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JAPANESE LACQUERS

Efforts are now being made to procure for this Museum an educational exhibit of Japanese lacquers in all stages of development showing the several processes of manufacture and the different varieties of lacquer wares. The Museum has a good collection of Chinese and Japanese lacquers, among which are some exceedingly fine examples. The best of these is a cabinet containing two enclosed compartments and seven drawers, the total height being five feet four and a half inches. This is one of the finest pieces of lacquer exhibited by the Japanese Commission at the Centennial Exposition in 1876. The frame work, including the uprights and beading around the drawers and shelves, is the carved cinnabar red lacquer, known as *tsuishu*, while the panels of closets and drawers are of *roiro*, or greenish black, lacquer, with gold painted designs and inlays of pearl, tortoise-shell, ivory, malachite and jade.



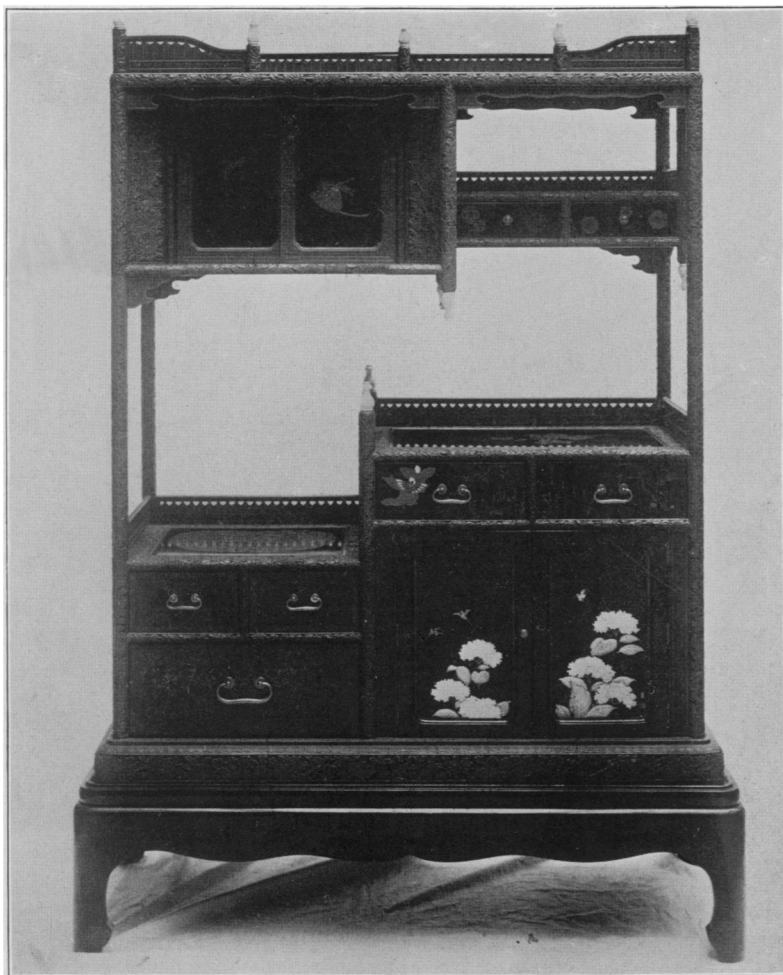
LARGE BOWL, JAPANESE
Showing Takamakie, Hiramakie and Nashiji Lacquers
Faces of Figures in Ivory

Of an entirely different nature is a bowl more than twenty-two inches in diameter, which is covered throughout with gold lacquer, the heads and hands of the figures alone being of inlaid ivory. The panels around the edge are principally what is known as *takamakie*, or raised gold lacquer, relieved by the *hiramakie*, or flat gold lacquer, and the *nashiji*, or sprinkled gold variety, so called because it resembles the skin of a pear.

The oldest example in the collection is an exquisite little writing case of the early part of the eighteenth century. The top of the cover is of the prized *hirame-nashiji* lacquer, entirely covered with minute scales of gold leaf which have been carefully set in place, one at a time, by means of a bamboo point. The box is lined with the raised gold lacquer, known as *takamakie*, in beautiful designs, while graceful flowers of inlaid mother-of-pearl add an artistic touch.

There are also in the collection a number of fine examples of the Soo-chow or carved red cinnabar lacquer of the Chinese and numerous specimens of the black Chinese lacquer with painted decorations and mother-of-pearl inlays.

The proposed exhibit, showing tools and processes of lacquer making, will, undoubtedly, increase the interest of the public in this beautiful art and will enable them to distinguish the different varieties of lacquer which have been brought to such a wonderful state of perfection by the Japanese.



CABINET, JAPANESE

Showing Tsuishu, Roiro and Gold Lacquers
With Inlays of Pearl, Tortoise-Shell, Ivory, Malachite and Jade
From the Centennial Exposition, 1876